

**31– 03 – 2022**

**News:** Rhino population up by 200 in Kaziranga

- The population of the greater one horned or Indian rhinoceros in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve has increased by 200 in four years, the latest census revealed.

## **Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros**

- Great One-Horned Rhinoceros is of the **5 sub-species of Rhino family**.
- It is also known as **Indian Rhinoceros**.
- IUCN Red List status: **Vulnerable**.
- The Indian Rhino is listed in CITES **Appendix I** and Schedule I of **Wildlife protection act, 1972**.
- The Indian Rhinoceros has a **single black horn which is present in both male and female species**.
- Considered to be the most amphibious of all the rhino species, the Indian rhino is an **excellent swimmer**.
- It can run at speeds of up to **55km/hr for short periods of time**.
- Rhino population is distributed in **southern Nepal, northern West Bengal, and the Brahmaputra valley**.

- In India, Great Indian Rhinos are protected in **Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park, Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary and Orang National Park in Assam, Gorumara National Park and Jaldapara National Park in West Bengal, Dudhwa National Park cum Tiger Reserve and Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh.**
- **3/4<sup>th</sup> of Indian rhino is present in Kaziranga National Park.** The protected area with **most density of Rhinos is Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary.**
- All rhinos have **poor eyesight.** Rhinos have **blurred vision and tend to attack based on smell and hearing.**
- Protected under **Indian Rhino Vision 2020.**
- It is the **only sub - species of Rhino which is found in India.**
- Major threats faced include **Poaching for horn and skin and Habitat destruction.**
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has undertaken a **project to create DNA profiles of all rhinos present in India.** After completed, Indian Rhino will become India's first wild animal species to have all its members DNA-sequenced. It will be stored in Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.

## Asian Rhino Range Countries

- Asian Rhino Range Countries include **Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Nepal**. The **New Delhi Declaration** was adopted at the second meeting of the Asian rhino range countries. New Delhi Declaration underscored **trans-boundary collaboration among India, Nepal, and Bhutan for the conservation and protection of the greater one-horned rhino**.

## Kaziranga National Park

- Kaziranga National Park is located in **Assam**.
- The Kaziranga Protected Area was established in **1904** and is **located on the edge of the Eastern Himalayan Biodiversity Hotspot**.
- Kaziranga is a **World heritage Site, Tiger Reserve, Elephant reserve, and an Important Bird Area** under Birdlife International.
- The park area is circumscribed by the **Brahmaputra River, which forms the northern and eastern boundaries**, and the **Mora Diphlu, which forms the southern boundary**. Other notable rivers within the park are the Diphlu and Mora Dhansiri.
- Kaziranga is famous for Big 5 animals – **Greater one-horned Rhinoceros; Indian Elephant; Asiatic wild water buffalo, Royal Bengal Tiger, Swamp Deer**.

- Kaziranga has the largest population of the Wild water buffalo anywhere accounting for about 57% of the world population.
- Kaziranga has the highest Tiger density of 12.72 per 100 sq km in 2014.
- Kaziranga is also home to 9 of the 14 species of primates found in the Indian subcontinent.
- Currently, an Invasive Alien Species (IAS) named Congress grass depletes the Elephant grass favourite food of Indian Rhinoceros.
- Recently, Assam government has approved the addition of 30.53 km<sup>2</sup> to the 884km<sup>2</sup> National Park.
- The additions are habitat corridors and would help provide connectivity to Orang and Nameri National Parks across river Brahmaputra.
- National Highway 37 (which connects Karimganj in Assam with Bhalia in Manipur) passes through Kaziranga.
- Recently, Kaziranga was accredited with Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS) for its excellence in Tiger conservation.
- Recently, Kaziranga became the first national park in India to have been equipped with satellite phone, which are generally used by the law enforcing agencies. The satellite phones will give an edge to the forest personnel over the poachers and also during emergencies like floods.
- The public is barred from using satellite phones in India.

- In the World Rhino Day 2021, The “world’s largest stockpile” of rhino horns was burned in the headquarters of the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, amid Vedic rituals, which was aimed at dispelling myths that have driven the illegal horn trade and the poaching of the animal.



## 7 NATIONAL PARKS IN ASSAM

- 6th : Raimona National Park (Notified in 2021)
- 7th : Dihing Patkai National Park (Notified in June 2021)